

Health Promotion Resource Guide

Obtaining Command Support: Weight Management



Command buy-in is critical to the success of any Weight Management Program (WMP). Command support will improve the reach and impact of the WMP. Consider the Commander as your program's biggest champion.

Every Commander wants to know: What's in it for me?

Use these strategies to answer that question.

- Know your Commander's **priorities**. If you don't know, ask.
- Make sure the Commander knows the WMP **partners** and **supporters**. No one likes to go out on a limb.
- Communicate the value of the WMP *for the Commander*. Will the program save **resources**? Will there be a decrease in **lost duty time**? Will unit **readiness** be improved? How has your WMP impacted **attrition** and **retention**?

HELPFUL HINT: Be sure your WMP is represented on the monthly/quarterly Command report.
Submit concrete data that demonstrates how your WMP is enhancing readiness and health.

Relating weight management to force readiness

- A WMP can provide Soldiers, including Army Reserve, National Guard and medical hold troops, with a way to make lifestyle changes **early** – before a flag from their unit.
- Overall **force readiness** is **enhanced** when the health of Soldiers and their families is improved through lifestyle changes.
- WMPs can **improve** overall **health** status and reduce incidence of obesity-related chronic illness.
- WMPs can improve families' ability to mentally and physically withstand the pressures of long and/or recurring **deployments**.
- A WMP provides knowledge and tools to incorporate healthier lifestyles into participant lives and also into the lives of their **families**. In most Army families, the spouse is the primary decision-maker regarding shopping, cooking, eating, family activities and other behaviors that are tied to weight management. As the spouse learns and changes behaviors, the new, health behaviors have the potential to transform the entire family (including the Soldier).
- A healthy family will translate into a healthier and **more ready** Soldier.

Lessons learned

- Collect data to show Commanders **specific results** from your program.
- Involve Commanders in your **marketing** plan as often as possible.
 - For example, ask the Commander to judge a program logo contest.
- Include line leaders (such as 1SGTs) in your **communication chain**.
- Find out who makes things happen at the **unit level** and get their support.
- Brief your program to leadership on a regular basis. Keep the brief **short** and **concise**: be able to describe your program in 15 minutes or less.
- The Family Readiness Group can be a great **partner**, especially when the WMP is targeted toward family members.

Bottom line

Buy-in from line leadership is essential to the success of a WMP for Soldiers. Find out unit concerns and design the WMP to address those issues.

For more Health Promotion Resource Guides, go to <http://chppm-www.apgea.army.mil/dhpw/Population/HPPI.aspx>.

For more information about the HPPI Program email: hppi_program_info@amedd.army.mil.